
Professional Web Graphics

Matt Slaybaugh





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Preface

Web graphics are an important part of all professional Web sites. Not only do they decorate pages, but they also establish an identity and make the site more useful. *Professional Web Graphics* will familiarize you with how to create and use Web graphics in professional Web sites. The book introduces common terms and guides you through the process of creating and optimizing graphics for the Web. This book focuses on the types of projects that Web graphic artists and designers encounter every day, including creating images such as backgrounds, buttons, icons, and thumbnails. It also provides detailed explanations of creating more complex Web graphics, such as animations, rollovers, image maps, and image slices.

This book takes a goal-oriented approach toward teaching Web graphics creation, which is different from many other graphics tutorials. Most books that attempt to cover Web graphics focus on the tools used to create images, rather than on the images themselves. *Professional Web Graphics* focuses on the end-results required in real-world Web design projects, and along the way explains the tools necessary to achieve these results.

Because Adobe Photoshop is the standard for creating computer graphics, this book uses Photoshop as the software for creating basic Web graphics. It also uses ImageReady to create Web-only graphics such as animations, image maps, and rollover buttons. However, you can apply the concepts and guidelines presented in this book using any commercial or shareware image editors.

The Intended Audience

Professional Web Graphics is intended for anyone who wants to create effective, useful, high-quality Web graphics. You should be familiar with the desktop interface of either Mac OS or Windows. Most chapters require only the use of Photoshop or ImageReady, and full explanation of the features used is included. Some chapters require simple coding of HTML and Cascading Style Sheets (CSS), so basic familiarity with these languages is required. For the projects that use HTML and CSS, you can use either an HTML editor such as Dreamweaver, or a basic text editor such as BBEdit or TextPad. Some exercises at the end of the book require simple JavaScript programming. Although familiarity with JavaScript is not required, it is recommended.

The Approach

This book is organized into three major sections: basic, intermediate, and advanced Web graphics. The basic section covers general topics about computer graphics and issues about Web graphics that apply to every project you work on. These chapters introduce Photoshop, and explain how to optimize images, display graphics in Web pages, and acquire images to use on the Web. The intermediate section guides you through creating and using Web graphics that do not require special HTML coding or special Web graphics software, such as background images, icons, buttons, and thumbnail images. The advanced section shows you how to create and use graphics that require special coding to display on the Web, including animations, rollover effects, image maps, and image slices.

Each chapter provides a thorough explanation of the topic, concrete examples from professional settings, and opportunities for applying principles and practicing skills in hands-on tasks. Each chapter concludes with a summary, review questions, Hands-on Projects, and a Case Project. The summary and review questions highlight and reinforce major concepts. The Hands-on Projects are guided activities that let you practice, reinforce, and extend the techniques presented in the chapter. They also enhance your learning experience by providing additional ways to apply your knowledge in new situations. The Case Project lets you use the skills that you have learned in the chapter to solve real-world problems.

Overview of This Book

The examples, steps, projects, and cases in this book will help you achieve the following objectives:

- Use Adobe Photoshop and ImageReady to create and edit Web graphics
 - Optimize graphic files to reduce their size as much as possible without compromising the quality of the image
 - Generate and use HTML to display images on a Web page
 - Acquire images for the Web by creating, scanning, or photographing them
 - Create, use, and tile background images
 - Create and use icons that convey meaning in a small space
 - Create buttons and enhance them with 3-D effects such as shadows and highlights
 - Create a thumbnail gallery of miniature images that link to full-sized images
 - Create GIF animations and understand the pros and cons of other animation formats, such as Flash and Shockwave
 - Make Web pages interactive by including rollover effects
 - Create splash screens with image maps that invite viewers to explore your Web site
 - Create sliced images positioned with HTML
-

Chapter 1 introduces you to the basic concepts of Web graphics and the tools and techniques used to create them. In **Chapter 2**, you learn how to optimize Web graphics, which means making the image file size as small as possible without compromising the quality of the image—your major goal in creating graphics for the Web. After you optimize your images, you incorporate them into a Web page and preview them in a browser so you know how they will appear on users' screens. **Chapter 3** explains how to use HTML to include images on a Web page. Whether you are creating graphics for print, the Web, or other electronic media, you need to acquire images on your computer before you can edit them. **Chapter 4** covers all your options for acquiring images. **Chapter 5** explains how to create background images, which are the simplest images to design and use in Web pages. The most common type of Web graphic is the icon, which is used to express identity and information with a small image. **Chapter 6** covers the creation of icons. Buttons are covered in **Chapter 7**. Buttons are a specific type of icon that are designed to be clicked to take the user to another page. **Chapter 8** explains the fundamentals of creating thumbnail galleries, and shows you how to write a script in Photoshop to save you time when creating multiple images. In **Chapter 9**, you will learn how to create simple, effective animations. **Chapter 10** teaches the complexities of JavaScript rollover effects. Image maps are images that can link to multiple pages and are useful as splash screens that introduce users to a Web site. Image maps are covered in **Chapter 11**. Another type of graphic used for splash screens is the sliced image. Sliced images are really many images placed next to each other. They can contain animations and rollover effects, and are one of the most advanced types of Web graphics. Sliced images are covered in chapter 12.

Each chapter in *Professional Web Graphics* includes the following elements to enhance the learning experience:

- **Chapter Objectives:** Each chapter in this book begins with a list of the important concepts to be mastered within the chapter. This list provides you with a quick reference to the contents of the chapter as well as a useful study aid.
 - **Step-By-Step Methodology:** As new concepts are presented in each chapter, tutorials are used to provide step-by-step instructions that allow you to actively apply the concepts you are learning.
 - **Tips:** Chapters contain Tips designed to provide you with practical advice and proven strategies related to the concept being discussed. Tips also provide suggestions for resolving problems you might encounter while proceeding through the chapter tutorials.
 - **Chapter Summaries:** Each chapter's text is followed by a summary of chapter concepts. These summaries provide a helpful way to recap and revisit the ideas covered in each chapter. They include a list of common sample code techniques that were presented during the chapter that can be used for review or reference while proceeding through the chapter tutorials.
-

- **Review Questions:** End-of-chapter assessment begins with a set of approximately 20 review questions that reinforce the main ideas introduced in each chapter. These questions ensure that you have mastered the concepts and understand the information you have learned.



Hands-on Projects: Along with conceptual explanations and step-by-step tutorials, each chapter provides Hands-on Projects related to each major topic aimed at providing you with practical experience. Some of the Hands-on Projects provide detailed instructions, while others provide less detailed instructions that require you to apply the materials presented in the current chapter with less guidance. As a result, the Hands-on Projects provide you with practice creating Web Graphics in real-world situations.



Case Project: The case project builds from one chapter to the next, providing you with a portfolio of Web graphics. The case is designed to help you apply what you have learned in each chapter to real-world situations. It gives you the opportunity to independently synthesize and evaluate information, examine potential solutions, and make recommendations, much as you would in a professional situation.

Resources for Instructors

The following supplemental materials are available when this book is used in a classroom setting. All of the teaching tools available with this book are provided to the instructor on a single CD-ROM.

Electronic Instructor's Manual. The Instructor's Manual that accompanies this textbook includes:

- Additional instructional material to assist in class preparation, including suggestions for lecture topics.
- Solutions to all end-of-chapter materials, including the Review Questions and Hands-on Projects.

ExamView®

This textbook is accompanied by ExamView, a powerful testing software package that allows instructors to create and administer printed, computer (LAN-based), and Internet exams. ExamView includes hundreds of questions that correspond to the topics covered in this text, enabling students to generate detailed study guides that include page references for further review. The computer-based and Internet testing components allow students to take exams at their computers, and also save the instructor time by grading each exam automatically.

PowerPoint Presentations. This book comes with Microsoft PowerPoint slides for each chapter. These are included as a teaching aid for classroom presentation, to make available to students on the network for chapter review, or to be printed for classroom distribution. Instructors can add their own slides for additional topics they introduce to the class.

Data Files. Data Files, containing all of the data necessary for steps within the chapters and the Hands-on Projects, are provided through the Course Technology Web site at www.course.com, and are also available on the Teaching Tools CD-ROM.

Solution Files. Solutions to end-of chapter review questions, exercises, and Hands-on Projects are provided on the Teaching Tools CD-ROM and may also be found on the Course Technology Web site at www.course.com. The solutions are password-protected.

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Matt Slaybaugh

Read This Before You Begin

TO THE USER

You can use your own computer to complete the tutorials, Hands-on Projects, and Case Project in this book. To use your own computer, you will need the following:

- **A Web browser**, such as Microsoft Internet Explorer version 5.0 or later, or Netscape Navigator version 6.
- **Adobe Photoshop 6.0 and ImageReady.**
- **An HTML editor**, such as Dreamweaver, or a text editor such as BBEdit or TextPad.

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